

England :  
= Ancient

NO. 1

ANCIENT  
SKILLS

AND

WISDOM  
REVIEW

Published and edited by:

Paul Screeton, 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland.

Available at certain shops and on subscription at 50p per issue or £2 annually.

LEAD-IN

You are reading the first issue of a magazine I've been planning for eight months or so. It will be published quarterly and is designed to primarily review books and magazines on subjects which lie broadly in the area of ancient skills and wisdom. These being the occult/parapsychology, prehistory (leys, megalithic monuments, etc.), folklore, UFOs, geomancy, New Age thought, and Man. As it develops I hope to include profiles of writers and researchers, but I must stress that ASWF is not designed to accommodate articles on topics of the books reviewed. Many other magazines are capably covering this as the review will show. And reviews will be by your editor unless otherwise noted (as here with a piece by the Great Beast of Sunderland - Steve Palmer!). The magazine has been delayed deliberately to coincide with the paperback imprint of my own book, "Quicksilver Heritage", and I'm unashamedly giving myself a fair whack of publicity here in the form of extracts from reviews of it when it saw its first light of day in hardback. Incidentally the changes are minimal and largely grammatical.

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QUICKSILVER HERITAGETHE MYSTIC LEYS: THEIR LEGACY OF ANCIENT WISDOM

(ABACUS, £1-95)

WHAT THE  
CRITICS  
SAID:

The spate of books on comparative religion, occultism, mysticism, magic, witchcraft and allied subjects, continues. This, I think, in a world where materialism, selfishness and greed have for so long been in the ascendant, is a desirable thing. Especially so, since the hunger and avidity for such writings clearly indicates a near-universal condition of spiritual starvation on almost every level.

One must, however, to be fair to one's audience; and by this I mean the intelligent reader, the student of such matters, and the librarian. I say this because not every title which appears deserves serious consideration, and there are a few which are little more than hocus-pocus catchpennies, aimed at the purse rather than the intelligence. For this reason I have selected only those which I feel deserve a permanent place on the shelves of private and public libraries, and each of which, in its own particular way, offers information and elucidation commensurate with the efforts of those who seek along this rewarding path.....

...Those who find interest in the above (Frazer's "Golden Bough") study may also find themselves drawn to the remarkable QUICKSILVER HERITAGE of Paul Screeton, which deservedly received approving recognition during a BBC broadcast.....The publishers can safely claim that this book is a guide for those who are striving to uncover the lost knowledge of the past. The text, which is remarkably well organised and clearly written, is aptly illustrated, and supplied with an unusually full bibliography of books and articles.

--- Alan Hull Walton: "Books & Bookmen".

If Paul Screeton is the modern heir to the pioneering work of Alfred Watkins, QUICKSILVER HERITAGE is certainly as stimulating as THE OLD STRAIGHT TRACK.

--- G.S.D.D.: "Quest".

....Paul Screeton has been for some years, and for 60 issues, editor of THE LEY HUNTER, ... so no one could be better qualified for the daunting task of bringing together the wide range of subjects that contribute to the study of the ley system. These include, writes Paul, "ancient sites, legends, myths, old churches, flora and fauna, the heavens, astrology, cosmic rays, flying saucers, the occult, vanished civilisations, elementals..." and to these he adds dowsing, terrestrial zodiacs, sacred geometry, cabala, magic and very much else. This vast compendium, every item illustrating and aspect of the ley-makers' science, is dealt with in a series of short chapters which provide a brief introduction to the subjects covered.

Paul Screeton is from Hartlepool, where the inhabitants are said once to have hanged a monkey on suspicion of it being a French spy, and the mixture of sound common sense and wild imagination so displayed by the Hartlepool people is characteristic of Paul's book. In Fortean jargon he is an "inclusionist", more concerned with recording than evaluating, and he follows Fort's dictum: "We substitute acceptance for belief". This approach is no doubt appropriate for the subject, for the science of the ancient surveyors or geomancers who planned the vast engineering works that make up the ley system was magical, in that it combined the physical with the metaphysical sciences.....The reductionist methods of modern science are therefore inadequate for investigating the ancient variety and in the study of leys the insights of the madman may be as valuable as the evidence of history and archaeology. The authorities quoted by Paul range from Carl Jung to Marianne Faithfull. In his book, as in his magazine, he gives an uncritical hearing to all parties on the issues of leys, and QUICKSILVER HERITAGE is a summary of all that has been discovered or imagined about the subject.

-- John Michell: "Science of Thought Review".

The devious ways to enlightenment are many and varied. Similarly the paths of initiation spiral into a complex pattern that leads the seeker on a gradually unfolding metaphysical quest.

As one carefully reads through the pages of QUICKSILVER HERITAGE, a full awareness of the genuine strangeness and complexity appertaining to this quest becomes steadily more apparent.

It is a real measure of Paul Screeton's dedication and insight that the reader never falters, although the purely literary terrain is sometimes rather rocky. Anyone who ventures into the ambience of QUICKSILVER HERITAGE is moving across the boundaries of accepted "historical reality" and traversing tracks that however straight, lead forward into deeply convoluted realms of myth and magic. The book surveys a wonderful landscape of ancient dreams but it is decidedly not a fantasy for the dreams explored are the constant, archetypal images that power the human imagination. They encompass visions of harmony, truth, joy and most basic of all, a universal cosmic consciousness that is immanent at the root of all knowledge.

The readers of this magazine need no synopsis to the contents of this seminal study of leys and allied phenomena. Much of the subject matter is drawn from the pages of THE LEY HUNTER itself, and Paul Screeton allows many of the writers to expound their researches in their own words. This is a good trait in an author, for the temptation to paraphrase everyone's work, so inflating the writer's ego with a false originality, is paramount in modern books on the occult and its related fields. One of the major joys in reading QUICKSILVER HERITAGE is that it forms an excellent encyclopaedic compendium on the subject of speculative archaeology and spiritual physics. ....

The book has been compiled as a direct guide to almost every subject in the canon of reasoned occult realization. The wilder reaches of pseudo-spirituality and glib Golden Age ravings are studiously avoided, for in using the geomantic magic in the landscape as his anchor, Paul Screeton keeps his feet firmly on the ground.

...For those who have been waiting more than two years for this book it only remains to be said that it was certainly worth waiting for.

-- Anthony Roberts: "The Ley Hunter".

...There is a great deal of smoke in Paul Screeton's QUICKSILVER HERITAGE, but one also catches glimpses of the fire. I should think that just about everything that has the remotest connection with leys is included in this compendious volume and the easy-going, open, semi-poetical style of the author quite definitely grows on you. I have no doubt that some may accuse him of being over-credulous, but personally I would prefer that all relevant or near-relevant material was included even if some does seem a little dubious. It might be the odd seemingly unimportant puff of smoke that may contain an important clue to the nature of the fire, which is all that somebody somewhere may need to complete the jigsaw.....

-- Frank Dineen: "Essex Dowser".

....."What especially has to be said is that this is a work of scholarship in its field, deeply researching a wide range of speculative studies and impressive at that level alone. Even putting aside the occult, the simple pleasures of tracing leys through the countryside must not be forgotten, either; and Mr Screeton naturally includes North-East examples.

-- M.W.: "The Northern Echo" (Darlington).

...."Although a trifle long-winded in places, with a few attempts at poetic prose here and there, it still succeeds in being a valuable addition to the ley seeker's library. It cannot ouse John Michell's inspired works, for the magic of the subject, yet it remains an important addition to the information side of leys..."

-- "Elysian".

...."Since the publication of John Michell's book THE VIEW OVER ATLANTIS few can be unaware of the newly-awakened interest in these mysterious prehistoric trackways marked out across our countryside. Paul Screeton's book may well bring this subject to the closer attention of many for whom THE VIEW OVER ATLANTIS was too esoteric to follow, involved as it was with recondite questions of mathematics. Mr Screeton writes in a more popular style, and describes his book as "an advertisement for leys: an invitation to find them."

....Orthodox archaeology, of course, will have none of it, but ley hunters regard their enthusiasm as "live archaeology", to which this book, readable and attractive as it is, will no doubt be a significant contribution.

-- D.V.: "Prediction".

...."If you are at all interested in leys, landscape zodiacs, practical occultism or simply the green hills and dales of Albion, this book will have something to say to you."

-- "Torc".

...."Screeton's book, in a world of despair, gives hope to the man-in-the-street who, after all, is simply the man-on-the-ley.

-- G.R. Phillips: "The Ley Hunter".

(Who in a personal letter added:

I find myself often in very warm agreement with you; and it seems to me that you put in an enormous amount of original thought and keen judgment, and that some passages -- notably the whole section on the Aquarian Age -- will emerge as classics quoted and re-quoted for many years to come.



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The book portrays the tallest prehistoric structure in Europe in all its magnificence: inside and out; in its setting in the landscape and cosmically; in comparison with other mounds; in legend; in prehistory and history; in religion; in etymology. It's a thorough analysis and Dames's obsession with the monument is captivating. He identifies it as the clearest expression of the Great Goddess cult of the Neolithic period.

A trained archaeologist, Dames does not share his colleagues' view that Silbury THE largest barrow of them all. This farcical notion should have been buried with the deadening anti-climax of the costly and egotistical TV spectacular with Prof. Richard Atkinson playing the role of Pundit. Rebuffed and demoralised no doubt, Atkinson has said: "The mystery of Silbury Hill is unanswerable -- and always will be."

Dames thinks **not**. His theory is that Silbury depicts the pregnant Great Mother fertility symbol and setting for an **ritual** around Lammas to create a "theatrical" appearance of the goddess giving birth to a reflection of the full Harvest Moon, which then suckles her.

Predictably, in ostrich fashion, Prof. Glyn Daniel retorts: "Absolute nonsense." His alternative? "I think it's the biggest round barrow in existence, and there's no more to it than that." So there. The arrogance of the man!

Though not totally convinced myself I've a strong suspicion that Dames is correct. While reading the book I had a vivid dream in colour (I'm invariably a black 'n' white viewer of the lantern shows in my head). I was sat on Silbury, whether in the past or future I don't know, but there were others climbing it and I was looking down into the moat where swam very large brown fish.

He chooses to make no mention of leys, Cotsworth's calendrical writings or the modern Druids' idea that along with Stonehenge, Avebury and West Kennet Long Barrow it is part of a celestial diagram. However, it is a distinguished portrait of Silbury.

"The Silbury Treasure" ---- moonshine? I think not.

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THE LEY HUNTER ;:: £2 p.a., bi-monthly, from P.O. Box 152, London,  
N10 1EP.

Since Paul Devereux took over the reins of THE LEY HUNTER from me I don't think it has made any significant shift in content matter, but naturally professional printing has done wonders by allowing for exact diagrams and photographs. Much of issue 72 was composed of articles gathered during my editorship and Paul has been receiving material from several of the previous regular contributors.

Issue 72 has Guy Ragland Phillips on black horse hill figures; Mollie Carey on Avebury and the Holy Grail; Nazca; Steve Moore on "Leys and Feng Shui"; the ongoing mathematical alignments debate; Paul Screeton on his editorship; and John Wilcock in Dorset.

Issue 73 has Janet and Colin Bord outlining the themes of "The Secret Country"; Chris Castle at Maeshowe; and Steve Moore "Mirroring".

Issue 74 has dowser Tom Graves on "Earth Acupuncture"; Jimmy Goddard and Michael de Styrcea separately on ley power; John Michell on "Statistical Ley Hunting"; Ian P. Worden on pyramids; Richard Elen on magical technology; and Paul Screeton on Margaret Clitherow's life and death.

Reviews of books are covered, readers letters and there are many miscellaneous items.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Dr Maverick, of 64 High Bank, Manchester, M18 8UL, seeks to discuss references, material and implications of hallucinogens, psychotherapy, religion, medicine, and psychology with interested parties.

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ESSEX DOWSER Nos. 11 & 12 combined. A newsletter circulated to members and friends of the Essex Dowsing Group and published as and when possible by Frank Dineen, 4 Brentwood Road, Ingrave, Essex, CM13 3QH. It is financed directly from donations so if interested remember that such publications aren't charities. Somewhat personal and rambling -- and that's no criticism, specially when you've no strict subscription list or timetable. Swaps with other mags and covers more than simply dowsing, with occult/philosophical inquiry going on. Unlike anything else I've come across in our large field.

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"TAO TEH KING" -- ALEISTER CROWLEY  
(Askin Publishers, 16 Ennismore Avenue,  
London W4 1SF.

Crowley's writings have always held a fascination for me, after I have surmounted initial horror at the man's arrogance and rank egotism. His interpretation of this Chinese classic the "Tao Teh King" is extremely interesting in parts, but like "Magick in Theory and Practice", a little too deep for all but the most learned scholars of the Kabbalah and mysticism.

I must confess an almost complete ignorance of Chinese religion, symbolism and myth before attempting to read this book. The eight-page introduction by Stephen Skinner I found most enlightening, but the first chapter is something of a plunge into cold water.

Crowley opens by equating the Way of Tao and Virtue of Teh with his own immeasurable Nuit and dimensionless point Hadit. In his first line Crowley points out: "Tao parallels Pleroma, Siva, Jod; Teh parallels Logos, Shakti, He. But the conception of Lao Tzu (the author) unites all these at their highest."

From my understanding of magic in the past, I had been led to believe that mysticism such as the Tao are based on acceptance and are the right-hand path, whilst magic, although reaching the same goals, takes the left-hand path and is based around the influencing by oneself of one's own circumstances.

But upon further reading I discovered that he was not writing as tongue-in-cheek as I first thought. Another example of his love of allegories, Crowley is here merely drawing parallels between the opposites.

I feel I must agree with Crowley's criticism of James Legge's translation of the "Tao Teh King". In his preface he says, "Legge had translated the Chinese with singular fidelity. But in almost every verse the interpretation was entirely misleading." Crowley spent three weeks reshuffling Legge's version and to my mind worked many improvements.

Once one becomes used to his constant cross-references to Gnosticism and the Kabbalah, certain chapters can be entertaining, readable and pithy.

Apart from drawing together active and passive principles of Crowley's own commentary, the book itself reads rather like the I Ching. Divided into 91 chapters it covers such subjects as "Quieting Folk", "Establishing the Law of Freedom" and "The Withdrawal from the Common Way", something, I always thought, that came naturally to Crowley.

Although most chapters trace the path of the Tao and the Taoist approach to different states of being, there are several with general advice for those intending to lead a "better life"!

Anyone who has read only of Crowley the "black magician" in our glorious Sunday papers would do well to try the "Tao Teh King". Crowley here is at his most serious, proving himself to be a master of religious and spiritual understanding and a walking dictionary of Kabbalistic lore. One line I found very important in relation to Crowley's experimentation here was: "The true path is level and smooth; but men love side paths." Until his magical retirement anyway, Crowley doubtless regarded himself as a man and as such prone to deviations from the true path.

This book is vastly removed from his magical writings and I see it as a "side path" from whatever his true path was. Although not entirely assumed, the book I feel must have strained even Crowley's undoubted skills. He had a remarkable understanding and working knowledge of both magick and mysticism, but for all his

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efforts I am still left with the feeling that the separate paths are not able to meet.

The actual writing of the was not, of course, performed by Crowley himself but by the man in the guise of one of his previous incarnations -- this time a scholar Ko Yuen. I was pleased to see that he had lost none of his "stage presence".

But any criticism of the book is invalidated by the introduction. "If any Sinologists have objections to anything in this translation, let him go absorb his Yang in his own Yin, as the Americans say," he wrote.

"But give me credit for an original masterpiece."

(( Reviewed by  
Steve Palmer ))

That I have no option other than to do.

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"INFO JOURNAL" is produced by The International Fortean Organization. Single copies \$1-75 U.S. / 90p U.K. Annual sub.: S/10 or £5. Business and editorial address 7317 Baltimore Avenue, College Park, Maryland, 20740. U.S.A. Published quarterly. Latest issue No. 20, has F.W. Holiday writing about serpent/dragon motif along lines of his book "The Dragon & the Disc"; Stuart W. Greenwood connecting Meydum and Avebury in what I find an unlikely way; a Romanian UFO landing; with other Fortean. Issue No. 17 had a fascinating piece about ancient small carved stones, the Cabrera Rocks; a Florida beach monster; Mencken's Bathtub Hoax. In No. 18 covers giant tortoises, paranormal voices, abominable snowmen, and UFOs.

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"ANCIENT HILL FIGURES OF ENGLAND" by NIGEL PENNICK.

(From author at 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8SU)

It is impossible to speculate upon how many ancient hill figures there might once have been in Britain, for the neglect during the past 20 years of the Gogmagog site at Wandlebury, Cambridgeshire, has shown how rapidly grass encroaches on a site. At one time these representations of animals or "gods" were scoured regularly with recolonizing turf being removed to make the underlying rock -- usually chalk -- bright and make the figure a conspicuous landmark. In addition to the assaults of flora, Christian prudery has worked to modify these pagan effigies.

Plentifully illustrated and tightly yet thoroughly written, Pennick not only details the ancient figures but provides an appendix of modern depictions (largely horses and regimental badges). The only grouse I have is that there is no bibliography (such as to mention Eric Maple's standard work). Nevertheless a good buy at 60p, inc. p&p.

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"FORTEAN TIMES" (See also page 1976 - 3).

Issue 17. Great cover of Devil on winged creature pointing into undergrowth. When International Times used this illustration I recall the caption as being "Now, where did I plant those darned seeds" -- an obvious reference to hemp (cannabis) seeds. A.J. Bell seeks links between words, Ivan Bunn draws connections between water and black dog apparitions, the editor focuses on birdmen, and there's a lengthy reviews section.

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"W.H. BLACK -- PIONEER GEOMANTIC RESEARCHER"

Selected works by William Henry Black written around 1870, edited by Michael Behrend, Nigel Pennick and Prudence Jones form the Institute of Geomantic Research's Occasional Paper No. 4. Black's major beliefs, reproduced in the papers collected here, were: that all the stones laid across Britain formed geometric lattice of sorts; that the boundary of ancient boroughs and those of counties were deliberately conceived for geomantic rather than mundane purposes. His concepts long predated the ley system of Alfred Watkins and the metrological researchs in Britain of Tyler, Lawton, and Mann, and other Europeans.

I would stress that this intrudes only marginally, for her notation of the way writers of such as Sir Walter Scott adapted or were inspired by legends, reveals a poetic appraisal of the material.

There is just the necessary minimum of comparison with legends of other districts of Britain or the placing of them in an international context.

Here are the Lucks originally fairy property, King Arthur, witches, Devil, early saints, giants, customs, and superstitions.

A native Cumbrian, the author brings to life the past and the present of the Lakeland counties.

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### "Undercurrents"

Subscriptions £3 p.a.; single or back copies 50p. From Undercurrents, Subscriptions, 11 Shadwell, Uley, Dursley, Glos.

This bi-monthly, excellently produced magazine could be loosely described as a radical technology organ, but far from being totally revolving around windmills, methane gas, compost, goats and solar heating, it tackles various aspects of utilising energies outside orthodox scopes. A rundown of issues 17 to 19 should show this:

17: Inner Technology special issue. Paul Screeton on "Terrestrial Zodiacs"; Paul Devereux on "Prehistoric Cosmolgy"; Tom Graves on "Dowsing"; plus Kirlian photography, more leys, seeds.

18: Appropriate Technology and the Third World. Most contributors suggest what should be done on the main theme. Plus sun, printing, leys and ley detectors, and nuclear debate.

19: Medicine -- Beyond Cure? Well-argued articles on the N.H.S. deficiencies and the alternatives. More on nuclear debate, why have we always been taught about the top 5% (so called) in society throughout history and Findhorn.

Of course there are reviews, news, gossip and lively letters. Down to earth rather than trendy; a cheery anarchism balances the Lefties; altogether a most fascinating read.

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"Quest" Specimen copy 45p; annual sub £1-50. From BCM--SCL Quest, London WC1V 6XX. Make payments to Marian Green. This quarterly for the modern, practising occultist has been produced since March 1970 and has maintained a consistent high standard with varied articles and reviews. Issue No. 28 includes: Paul Screeton on witchcraft associated in reality and legend with prehistoric sites; "Munnery" by Brian Peacock; Cottie Burland on King Arthur; and Sid Birchby on Wayland Smith; and a humorous and gossipy C.H. Williamson on his witchcraft museums. No. 27 included Charles Shepherd on Arthur and the Grail; Sid Birchby on Herne the Hunter; and more on Isis, power of sound, Diana, and Glastonbury. Always a particularly well balanced magazine.

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"Stonehenge Viewpoint" From P.O. Box 30887, Santa Barbara, California, 93105.

Vol. 8:No. 5. The main article in this newspaper-format magazine is "An Analysis of John G. Williams' Scemb Lines" by editor Donald L. Cyr. Unlike ley hunters who demand a minimum of 4 or 5 aligned points Williams allows for only 3. There is an attempt to locate the "lost" French stone circle in John Michell's "The Earth Spirit"; an ancient mysteries conference report; and cave expedition with Egerton Sykes; and an unconvincing article claiming to identify the language spoken at Stonehenge. There are also reviews of recent books by A. Burl and G.J. Formosa.

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Quite a number of books linked thematically will be reviewed next issue and these are works by Grinsell, Lethbridge, Graves, Hitching and the Bords, rather attempt to squeeze them into this issue. Several other books and many more magazines will also be reviewed.

However, his geometers were supposedly Romans whereas we now see that the pre-historic, indigenous population was active in laying out sites to metrological and geom triol considerations.

There is much on London's plan, Dorset, the Cerne Giant and mathematical matters, with an introduction and commentaries by the editors.

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"ARCAEOLOGICAL SITES OF BRITAIN" by PETER CLAYTON (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £4-50)

It is the obvious purpose of this work to supply information on a large selection of key sites for the general public. As such it is a most adequate book and the inclusion of 177 black and white illustrations are a real bonus. The writing style hardly rises far above the ordinary, despite what must have been an avowed aim to do more, for Clayton quotes the late Sir Mortimer Wheeler's words, "Dead archaeology is the dryest dust that blows."

Slacker, more poetic, controversial, sense of humour...these descriptions would more fit the speculative archaeology writings, but there is nothing of that sort here. Especially he's not controversial. Thom and Hawkins get one cursory mention. No Watkins, Michell, Screeton, et al. He thankfully has not, however, followed in the footsteps of the snide side of orthodoxy. Maybe he recalled another crumb of Wheeler's wisdom, that "Archaeology is not a science, it is a vendetta" Here there is no attack on fellow contemporaries or the mis-alleged "lunatic fringe".

Clayton has excavated, been managing editor of British Museum Publications, and lectures on archaeology. He takes photographs of ancient sites and some are among the fine selection here.

Informative, relatively comprehensive (we all have favourites sites and are piqued if these are ignored), and conventional, this book should certainly interest even more people in the old places.

To return to the matter of personal prejudices there seems to be a bias here towards Roman sites. The book, proper, begins with London and infuriatingly mentions nothing of the mounds (see "Prehistoric London" by E.O. Gordon) or Prof. Lyle B. Borst's megalithic site investigation regarding the House of Commons.

I can see this book being useful to plan itineraries of sites (grid references are a speciality) in specific areas, but would warn the investigator that there is more likely to be a special magic at the little-known sites off the beaten track. Clayton goes for the best-known sites. A useful exercise for anyone touring sites would be to use this work in conjunction with John Wilcock's "An Occult Guide to Ancient Britain".

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"THE FOLKLORE OF THE LAKE DISTRICT" by MARJORIE ROWLING (B.T. Batsford, £3-50)

My own researches into the legends relating to the megalithic monuments of Cumbria have amassed a wealth of data and it is obvious from what has obviously had to be left out how rich the folklore of this region is. Consequently the material between these covers is the choicest and the range is fulsome. There would have been no problem for the author in doubling or trebling the length and having sufficient meat to justify doing so, but as with everything today books' lengths must be balanced against their cover prices.

This book begins with a comprehensive survey of how supernatural lore has been associated with the landscape and ancient sites, and the author also notes names which suggest much lore has already been lost. Her being a historian shines through in the easy quantifying of when legends likely appeared and how the nature of the times modified tales. There is meticulous cross-checking of sources and though this scholarly approach occasionally detracts from the flow, it underlines the folklorist's diligent and cautious approach towards material which is often corrupted, not by rural tellers, but the recorders of the recorders.

BEST BOOKS OF 1976

There is every indication that 1976 will be remembered as a vintage year for the publication of books on hermetic topography. So I asked a number of earth mysteries "luminaries" to contribute their comments on their favourite books of 1976.

ANTHONY ROBERTS

"The Sirius Mystery" by Robert K.G. Temple (Sidgwick & Jackson, £6-95)

This book is quite simply the best study of extraterrestrial contact in the far past that has yet been written. The author is a young American scholar who has managed to break triumphantly out of the straightjacket of orthodox dogma and subsequently direct his considerable intellect into the paths of enlightened mythico/scientific exposition. The book's thesis is that some time around 4,000 B.C. beings from the star system of Sirius (8.8 light years from earth) contacted the embryonic Sumerian civilisation and that mythic memories of this dramatic influx of "Gods" filtered through Egyptian culture, ending up as the rituals of a West African tribe of Semitically-descended people, the Dogons. Dogon metaphysics contains exact knowledge of "Sirius B", the invisible, white dwarf companion of Sirius that has only been photographed in recent years! Details of "Sirius B's" elliptical orbit and curious physical properties are common knowledge among the Dogon priests, and Temple prints first-time translations from French anthropological research that gives irrefutable evidences of these facts. The beauty of this book is that the myth is as important as the science, in fact, as all true myth does, the myth contains, enriches and perpetuates the science in an appropriately human scaled poetic disguise. Temple analyses literally mountains of ancient mythic data in his pursuit of "the fish beings of Nommo" and in a chapter called "The Oracle Centres" shows how all the key religious sites of Antiquity were laid out to a geofetic schema based upon metrological and harmonic subtleties of fantastic precision. A "super-science" regulated by the rhythm of myth? A cosmological fusion of realised geomancy? Yes indeed! This is undoubtedly the book of the year.

"Megalithic Software" by Prof. Lyle B. Borst and Barbara Borst (Twin Bridge Press, U.S.A., \$8 or £4)

This is the first of a projected series that will attempt to quantify and scientifically explain the complexities and continuities of the worldwide prehistoric megalithic technology. This initial book deals exclusively with the British Isles. Prof. Borst is an American physicist and astronomer who has conducted meticulous research into the contentious realms of applied astroarchaeology. Following in the footsteps of Sir Norman Lockyer (and more recently Prof. Thom, Prof. Hawkins and John Michell) Prof. Borst has measured the foremost prehistoric monuments (stones, earthworks and barrows) and found an expertly used form of Pythagorean geometry and mathematics keyed into their principle dimensions. Parallel with this he has elucidated the uncannily accurate astronomical knowledge that the sighting and positioning of monuments were carefully designed to record. He has traced the lingering awareness of these ancient skills through their adaptations by Druids, Romans and Christians, correlating the geometry, tracing the astronomy, and reconciling it all through the overriding impetus of mythological memory. He is really charting the external patterns of the prehistoric cosmology and the "science" per se must always be seen as secondary to the spiritual implications. This is really a religious textbook, couched in overt terms of mathematical and scientific symbolism. It is a difficult, controversial and ultimately rewarding read and is certainly not for beginners. They, in their innocence are recommended to "The Secret Country" by Janet & Colin Bord (Elek Books), a pretty compendium of well-known folktales and geographical oddities.

"Earth Magic" by Francis Hitching (Cassell, £4-50)

There must be a Zen parable somewhere about the man who sat on the fence so long that when he fell off he landed in both directions. "Earth Magic" is rather like that. The author is a media man who has brought the instant techniques of fast and

colourful exposition to bear upon the stately, philosophically dense field of geomantic studies; the "earth mysteries". The result is an uneasy alliance of orthodox archaeology and mystical speculation that never quite meshes, because the author adopts such a sceptical position as to be almost blind to the ethos behind the jargon. Admittedly, Francis Hitching has admirably summed up the current state of almost ferocious flux existing in the realm of current archaeology. He also briefly analysed the work of "speculative" archaeologists and students of what is loosely termed as the "paranormal" in a reasonably succinct manner. His passages on megalithic stones and their strange powers are interesting despite the almost fanatical bias towards "scientific recognition" of such powers, and the emphasis on pendulum dowsing is appropriately mechanistic in this same context. Hitchings's "earth magic" stems directly from the laboratory and not the eternal spirit of Creation whose nuances and magical subtleties swirl and eddy across the body of our Sacred Globe. This is an important though very flawed work; its greatest import being as a bridge between orthodox and unorthodox systems of world history.

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#### BOB RICKARD

Although it does us good to rant at the failings of scientists we should not be foolish enough to neglect science as a path of knowledge. THE TAO OF PHYSICS by Fritjof Capra (Wildwood House, £6-95) gives an overview of high-energy physics and shows, point for point, how it has startling parallels not only in Greek philosophy but also in the early mysticism of India and China. Clearly the ancients didn't need super-whizzo accelotrons to gain true insight into the hidden mysteries of nature, time and space. Capra writes from a personal vision which unites science and mysticism, the book being an excellent primer of modern physics and oriented religion.

Evidence of strange phenomena in antiquity underlines the continuity of these obscure processes enshrined in folk-knowledge: only the style of reporting changes with the times. The Secret Country, by Janey & Colin Bord (Elek, £5-95) provides a real feast of data compiled from diverse and obscure folklore sources about the mysterious stones that loom in our landscape. These stones, heal or destroy, live, grow and breed, guard treasures, move and fly, become heavy or light when moved to ill or good purpose, and are the focus for stories of giants, devils, fairies, UFOs, dragons and phantom animals. It is beautifully illustrated with Colin's photos.

To round off a good year for interesting books I recommend The Sirius Mystery by Robert Temple (Sidgwick & Jackson, £6-95) as the most thought-provoking. It is a staggering tour-de-force of scholarly detective research investigating the evidences among the Dogon tribe and their Mediterranean contacts that this earth was visited by beings from the system of the star Sirius. The Dogon, in darkest Africa even knew of the existence of Sirius' dark companion, not discovered by the West until 1862 -- an intriguing mystery.

I also recommend, in a lighter vein, Illuminatus, a trilogy of novels by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson (Sphere, 75p each) which satirizes the political, mystical and pseudo-scientific preoccupations of modern generations. It's a damned good read, with lots of insight, sex and laffs, written in preposterous mixture of detective story, F&SF, occult/horror, and drug-rap styles.

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#### PAUL DEVEREUX

1976 has produced such a plethora of books on the Earth Mysteries that it is difficult to select any "favourites". One thinks of Tom Graves' useful book on dowsing, or the Bords' best book to date, The Secret Country, or Michael Dames' The Silbury Treasure...but the book I enjoyed most was Francis Hitching's Earth Magic. It is journalistic and doesn't constitute serious research, but Hitching has tried to see where orthodox archaeological notions can survive with "fringe" theories. It is a

brave attempt and makes interesting reading. I also like the cut-away illustrations of leys. Hitching notes that really long-distance alignments such as Michell's St Michael's Mount one (and one thinks also of Phillips' "Belinus Line") would need to be a mile or two wide. (I term these sort of alignments "Geomantic Corridors", and will describe elsewhere that they are related to, but not the same as leys.) Earth Magic is no masterpiece, but it is the right book at the right time.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### JANET ROBERTS

"ST. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA AT GLASTONBURY" by Lionel Smithett Lewis (Reprinted James Clarke, £2-60)

Anyone interested in the Somerset area will find this book a must. This is more or less a hardy annual and has been going since 1922, with its latest impression coming out in early '76. Lionel Smithett Lewis (for over 20 years vicar at Glastonbury) gathers together all the proof the orthodox scholars say doesn't exist and shows that Joseph of Arimathea did visit Britain and even brought Jesus with him! He details all the ancient traditions and folk myths connected to the area and gives most of the references verbatim. It is certainly a scholarly work.

"THE SILBURY TREASURE" by Michael Dames (Thames & Hudson, £5-50)

It's interesting to see a book spelling out the fact that a huge terrestrial effigy of a pregnant woman is lurking in the Wiltshire countryside (Silbury Hill). The geomantic earth currents are vitally connected to the female fertilising influence and women played an extremely important role in ancient religious activities. I find it hard to go along with all Mr Dames' theories and think it's a shame he didn't mention the other geomantic effigies and terrestrial zodiacs which are scattered around the British Isles. I would have thought this would have given much more verisimilitude to his book. The main thing is that it is well researched from the astronomical and folklore/historic point of view and I feel it must be a better than average book considering the way Professor Atkinson hysterically attacked it in "The Times".

"THE SECRET COUNTRY" by Janet and Colin Bord (Elez Books, £5-95)

Everyone is saying "it's an improvement on 'Mysterious Britain'" but is this any criterion to judge it by? It's nicely produced with lots of pictures and folktales but still does not go into enough geomantic detail and after years of dabbling in the subject I would have expected a more meatier book. It definitely tantalizes, but just when you're getting engrossed in "Inauguration Stones" you're into "Strange and Morstrous Serpents" etc. However, with the small amount of books available on this subject this is an edition worth buying (preferably when paperback), but Bords beware -- lots more books are in the pipeline with lots more theories and reasons incorporating more confirmed and committed interpretations.

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JOURNAL OF GEOMANCY, Vol.1, No. 2. Published by the Institute of Geomantic Research, Nigel Pennick, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8SD. (Price per issue 60p; annual sub. £3 includes quarterly journal and all IGR occasional papers during sub. period). This issue includes Herbert Hudson's 1933 conclusions on mounds and mark stones; leys traced by dowsing by Major B.W. Haswell; "Stanley Zodiac Revelation" by Paul Screeton; "Antoni Gaudi -- Catalan Geomantic Architect" by Nigel Pennick; news & letters. Well illustrated.

\* \* \* \* \*

FORTEAN TIMES, No. 18. Bi-monthly from Robert J.M. Rickard, P.O. Box 152, London N10 1EP. Sub.:£3 pa. "Diary of a Mad Planet" -- correlated Fortean data; religious images; Great Pyramid; lions (or parapsychical big cats) in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire; book reviews. Tidy format and lively.

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THE SUN, any issue. Daily from all newsagents. Despite title more interested in human bodies (see Page 3) than planetary bodies. Price 6p. Daily version of Titbits, Reveille; horse racing pages recommended.

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# RADICAL TECHNOLOGY

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*Radical Technology* is a large-format, extensively illustrated collection of original articles concerning the reorganisation of technology along more humane, rational and ecologically sound lines. The many facets of such a reorganisation are reflected in the wide variety of contributions to the book. They cover both the 'hardware' — the machines and technical methods themselves — and the 'software' — the social and political structures, the way people relate to each other and to their environment, and how they feel about it all.

The articles in the book range from detailed 'recipes' through general accounts of alternative technical methods, to critiques of current practices, and general proposals for reorganisations. Each author has been encouraged to follow her or his own personal approach, sometimes descriptive, sometimes analytic, sometimes technical, sometimes

political. The contributors are all authorities in their fields.

The book is divided into seven sections: Food, Energy, Shelter, Autonomy, Materials, Communication, Other Perspectives. Over forty separate articles include items on fish culture, small-scale water supply, biological energy sources, a definitive zoology of the windmill, self-help housing, building with subsoil, making car-tyre shoes, the economics of autonomous houses, what to look for in scrap yards, alternative radio networks, utopian communities, and technology in China. Between the main sections are interviews with prominent practitioners and theorists of Radical Technology, including John Todd of the New Alchemy Institute; Robert Jungk, author of *Humanity 2000*; the Street Farmers, a group of anarchist architects; Peter van Dresser; and Sietz Leefland, editor of *Small Earth*, the Dutch journal of alter-

native technology.

Also included between the main sections of the book is a series of visionary drawings by the gifted illustrator Clifford Harper, evoking the spirit and practice of Radical Technology: 'how it could be'. These drawings, or 'visions' include a communalised urban garden layout; a household basement workshop; a community workshop; a community media centre; a collectivised terrace of urban houses; and an autonomous rural housing estate.

The book ends with a comprehensive directory of the literature and active organisations in Radical Technology. This notes inevitable gaps in the book's coverage, points the reader to where more information can be found, and provides also an overall picture of a growing movement.

*Radical Technology*: Food and Shelter, Tools and Materials, Energy and Communications, Autonomy and Community. Edited by Godfrey Boyle and Peter Harper, and the editors of *Undercurrents*. Wildwood House, London; Pantheon Books, New York, 1976. 304pp, A4, illustrated, index. Hardback ISBN 0 7045 0218 6; paperback ISBN 0 7045 0159 7.

Vision No 1: Intended for rural or semi-rural areas. These dwellings would be independent of grid services. Some services (waste treatment, some food, space and water heating) would be provided at the household level, others (electricity, water, cooking gas, some food) at the community level, where economies of scale make shared facilities cheaper. The houses are based on Brenda Vale's 'Autonomous House' design.

